536

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

EXCISE

Saigon 22363

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Action PP RUEHC
DE RUMJIR 22363 0970515
EA ZNY CCCCC
P R 070505Z APR 67
Info FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY
SS INFO RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
GRNC RUHLHQ/CINCPAC
SP RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
SC STATE GRNC
SAH BT
L C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 22363
H
SAL CINCPAC FOR POLAD
E
NSC 1. [redacted] TOLD EMBOFF NIGHT
INR APRIL 5 THAT TRAN VAN HUONG HAS DECIDED ANNOUNCE OFFICIALLY
AID HIS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY AND THAT ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE
MADE WEEK END OF APRIL 8-9. DRAFT STATEMENT HAD BEEN SENT
TO VUNG TAU FOR APPROVAL BY HUONG.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT BEING MADE AT EARLY DATE, [redacted]
IN ORDER EXERT MAXIMUM PRESSURE ON ELECTION LAW AND PROCEDURES
FOR CONTROL OF ELECTIONS. MANY PEOPLE RECOMMENDED THAT
HUONG NOT ANNOUNCE UNTIL AFTER ELECTION LAW PROMULGATED,
FEARING THAT LAW MAY BE WORDED IN SUCH WAY AS TO RESTRICT

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FREEDOM OF ELECTIONS AND FAVOR MILITARY CANDIDATE. HUONG'S
ADVISORS AND HUONG, HIMSELF, FAVOR MORE POSITIVE APPROACH
OF ANNOUNCEMENT NOW, MADE CONDITIONAL ON FAIR ELECTION LAW.

3. TEXT OF STATEMENT APPROVED BY HUONG, IN FORM OF PRESS
INTERVIEW, GIVEN TO EMBOFF MORNING OF APRIL 7. IT HAS NOT
YET BEEN RELEASED TO PRESS. UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF TEXT
FOLLOWS:

(1) QUOTE: A. RECENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN MANY RUMORS IN THE DOMESTIC
AND FOREIGN PRESS REGARDING THE CANDIDACY OF FORMER PRIME
MINISTER TRAN VAN HUONG IN THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL RACE.
BUT, CONTRARY TO THE CASE OF MR. PHAN KHAC SUU, THERE HAS
NOT BEEN ANY OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER
HUONG CONFIRMING OR DENYING THOSE RUMORS. AS A RESULT,
DURING THE PAST WEEK FOUR NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS HAVE TRIED
TO MEET DIRECTLY WITH MR. HUONG TO CONFIRM THE RUMORS (OF
HIS CANDIDACY).

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [redacted] DATE 10/6/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

DECLASSIFIED

B. IN A PRIVATE AND INFORMAL MEETING RESERVED FOR US AT A PLACE IN VUNG TAU, FORMER PRIME MINISTER TRAN VAN HUONG ACKNOWLEDGED THAT, IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT STORIES IN THE PRESS

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HAVE BEEN UP TO NOW NO MORE THAN RUMORS -- SINCE HE HAS NEVER MADE AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON THIS MATTER -- HE ACTUALLY DECIDED TO BE A CANDIDATE WHEN HE FIRST HEARD THAT THERE WOULD BE AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT.

C. 'IN THE FACE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION OF OUR COUNTRY -- WHICH IS NOW GOING THROUGH A PERIOD OF EXTREME IMPORTANCE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF A FREE SOUTH VIETNAM -- I BELIEVE THAT IT IS MY DUTY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, IN ORDER TO GIVE THE PEOPLE OF THE NATION A WIDE CHOICE...'

D. MR. TRAN VAN HUONG ADDED THAT HIS DECISION TO RUN WAS ONLY PROMPTED BY A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND A DESIRE TO CONSTRUCT A TRULY DEMOCRATIC AND EFFECTIVE REGIME -- SOMETHING WHICH SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES HAD PREVENTED HIM FROM DOING DURING HIS BRIEF TENURE AS PRIME MINISTER.

E. THEREFORE, THIS DECISION IS TAKEN ONLY IN PRINCIPLE, IT MUST STILL DEPEND UPON THE FREE AND DEMOCRATIC NATURE OF THE FORTHCOMING ELECTORAL LAW AS WELL AS OF PREPARATIONS AND ORGANIZATION FOR THE ELECTION. END QUOTE

LODGE

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 1:25 A.M., APRIL 7
PASSED WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA USIA, NSA 1:25 A.M., APRIL 7

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